



**General Guidelines and Instructions
FY 2017
Rural Maryland Prosperity
Investment Fund
(RMPIF) – Rural
Entrepreneurship Development**

Overview: The objective of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund is to help raise the overall standard of living in rural areas to a level that meets or exceeds statewide benchmark averages by 2030, while preserving the best aspects of a pastoral heritage and rural way of life. Resources provided to the Fund are designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs and promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation. These investments will also enable local and regional public and nonprofit organizations to leverage additional non-state financial and human resources to facilitate the realization of sustainable rural development objectives.

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund will promote entrepreneurship and assist efforts that provide training and technical assistance to the entrepreneurs who can help build prosperous and sustainable rural communities by creating jobs, raising incomes, creating wealth and improving the quality of life. Rural entrepreneurship development would provide matching grants for entrepreneurial development activities of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions. Entrepreneurship, a key economic development strategy, supports existing rural business sectors (including agriculture and tourism), as well as innovation in technology and other economic development areas.

For more background, see: www.rural.maryland.gov

Application Deadline: August 15, 2016. Awards will be announced by October 14, 2016.

Fact Sheet and Guidelines for FY 2017 RMPIF Entrepreneurship Grant Applications

- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be a local government, institute of higher education, regional council, or be a 501(c)(3) IRS tax designation or similar and serve a regional or statewide rural constituency. Community Colleges, Career Technology Centers, Regional Councils and Libraries are eligible applicants. The applicant does not have to be located in a rural area or in the area it serves.
- **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS** must serve **more than one** rural county and be completed between August 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.
- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be in “Good Standing” with the State of Maryland. Go to <http://sdat.resiusa.org/UCC-Charter/Pages/CharterSearch/default.aspx>. We do not require a copy of the certificate; it is sufficient to provide a screen shot and attach it with your application. We will also accept a copy of the certificate if it is available.
- **RURAL COUNTIES ARE:** Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester.
- **THERE IS NO MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.** However, the Grant Review Board is looking to fund six entrepreneurial projects in FY 2017.
- **PRIORITY IS GIVEN** to applicants that have secured matching funds from non-state sources; however, matching funds are not required. Federal funds are considered matching funds.

- **ONLY VERY MINOR CHANGES IN SCOPE** are allowed after a grant has been awarded. Some project timelines can also be modified.
- **UNUSED GRANT FUNDS MUST BE RETURNED** to the Rural Maryland Council no later than July 13, 2017.
- **PREVIOUS AND CURRENT MAERDAF GRANTEES ARE ELIGIBLE** for a FY 2017 RMPIF grant **IF** they have met all the requirements of their previous grant agreements, including reporting deadlines.
- **THE RMPIF GRANT REVIEW BOARD** is comprised of representatives appointed by six state agencies. Its decisions are final. Those agencies are: the Rural Maryland Council, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Department of Business & Economic Development, the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, the Department of Housing & Community Development, and Department of Natural Resources.
- **ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED** of the status of their application no later than October 14, 2016.

How to Submit Your Application Packages

❖ **A complete RMPIF Application includes:**

- (1) A completed application form
(download the form by going to <http://rural.maryland.gov/maerdaf/>)
- (2) A project narrative no more than 5 pages long (as outlined in Section 2 of the Application), and
- (3) Appendix Attachments A through G (as outlined in Section 3 of the Application).

❖ **Applications will only be accepted by email this year.**

- Include all required items in ONE Microsoft Word or searchable PDF file, and
- Be sure we receive it by midnight on August 15, 2016. Email your application to:
rmc.mda@maryland.gov.
- You will receive an acknowledgement that your application has been received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, contact our office at (410) 841-5772.

❖ **Don't let your application be declared ineligible on a technicality:**

- Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted and will be deemed ineligible.
- Incomplete or illegible applications will be deemed ineligible. Double check your materials to ensure all attachments are included, all information is clearly written, all budget numbers add up, and all scans are legible.

If you have any questions, please contact **Charlotte Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council** at: charlotte.davis@maryland.gov or (401) 841-5774.

Thank you for applying.